CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A method for defining a service level agreement, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider and agreed to by the customer, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement and how to organize the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement;

receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

receiving second information defining a service level contract associated with the service level agreement, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests; and

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider by performing:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network; receiving result information based on the devices or agents performing the one or more tests; and creating and storing reporting information that identifies one or more exceptions between the level of service that has been offered and the result information;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows a user to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider by displaying a graphical user interface at the client;

wherein the graphical user interface comprises a first button that allows the user to add a round trip response SLA definition, a first box that allows the user to select a polling interval from a set of polling intervals, a second box that allows the user to select a probe type from a set of probe types, a source device box that allows the user to select one or more source devices from among a list of available devices generated by the server, a target device box that allows the user to specify one or more target devices either by address or by selecting from a device inventory, and one or more threshold boxes that allow the user to enter a set of threshold values for which the round-trip response should not exceed;

wherein the interface data causes updating the first information with changes that have been received through the graphical user interface.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method recited in claim 1, wherein the step of creating a schema includes the step of generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

6. (Currently amended) A computer readable storage medium carrying sequences of instructions for defining a service level agreement, the sequences of instructions including instructions which when executed by one or more processors cause the one or more processors to perform:

creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement and how to organize the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement;

receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer, wherein the service level agreement defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider and agreed to by the customer;

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema;

receiving second information defining a service level contract associated with the service level agreement, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests by performing:

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider by performing:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network; receiving result information based on the devices or agents performing the one or more tests; and creating and storing reporting information that identifies one or more exceptions between the level of service that has been offered and the result information;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and

communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows a user to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider by displaying a graphical user interface at the client;

wherein the graphical user interface comprises a first button that allows the user to add a round trip response SLA definition, a first box that allows the user to select a polling interval from a set of polling intervals, a second box that allows the user to select a probe type from a set of probe types, a source device box that allows the user to select one or more source devices from among a list of available devices generated by the server, a target device box that allows the user to specify one or more target devices either by address or by selecting from a device inventory, and one or more threshold boxes that allow the user to enter a set of threshold values for which the round-trip response should not exceed;

wherein the interface data causes updating the first information with changes that have been received through the graphical user interface.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Original) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, wherein the step of creating a schema includes the step of generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) A network device configured for defining a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider and agreed to by the customer, comprising:

a network interface;

a processor coupled to the network interface and receiving information from the network interface;

a computer-readable medium accessible by the processor and comprising one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by the processor, cause the processor to carry out the steps of:

creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement and how to organize the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement;

receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema:

receiving second information defining a service level contract associated with the service level agreement, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests by performing:

verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider by performing:

if said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema, then distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network; receiving result information based on the

devices or agents performing the one or more tests; and creating and storing reporting information that identifies one or more exceptions between the level of service that has been offered and the result information;

generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows a user to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider by displaying a graphical user interface at the client;

wherein the graphical user interface comprises a first button that allows the user to add a round trip response SLA definition, a first box that allows the user to select a polling interval from a set of polling intervals, a second box that allows the user to select a probe type from a set of probe types, a source device box that allows the user to select one or more source devices from among a list of available devices generated by the server, a target device box that allows the user to specify one or more target devices either by address or by selecting from a device inventory, and one or more threshold boxes that allow the user to enter a set of threshold values for which the round-trip response should not exceed;

wherein the interface data causes updating the first information with changes that have been received through the graphical user interface.

11. (Currently amended) A network device configured for defining a service level agreement that defines for a particular network a level of service that has been offered to a customer by a service provider and agreed to by the customer, comprising:

means for creating a schema that provides a set of rules for defining both the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement and how to organize the contents of the service level ~~agreements~~ agreement;

means for receiving first information defining the service level agreement, wherein said information defines one or more tests for monitoring the level of service that has been offered to the customer;

means for verifying that the information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema:

means for receiving second information defining a service level contract associated with the service level agreement, wherein said second information defines apply times for performing the one or more tests by performing:

means for verifying that said first information defining the service level agreement and said second information defining the service level contract conform with the level of service that has been offered to the customer by the service provider by:

means operative when said information defining the service level agreement conforms to the set of rules in said schema for distributing the one or more tests to one or more agents that are configured to communicate with devices that are associated with the particular network; receiving result information based on the devices or agents performing the one or more tests; and creating and storing reporting information that identifies one or more exceptions between the level of service that has been offered and the result information;

means for generating, at a server, interface data for defining service level agreements; and for communicating the interface data to a client that is remote from said server, wherein the interface data allows a user to define tests for monitoring the level of service that is being provided by the service provider by displaying a graphical user interface at the client;

wherein the graphical user interface comprises a first button that allows the user to add a round trip response SLA definition, a first box that allows the user to select a polling interval from a set of polling intervals, a second box that allows the user to select a probe type from a set of probe types, a source device box that allows the user to select one or more source devices from among a list of available devices generated by the server, a target device box that allows the user to specify one or more target devices either by address or by selecting from a device inventory, and one or more threshold boxes that allow the user to enter a set of threshold values for which the round-trip response should not exceed;

wherein the interface data causes updating the first information with changes that have been received through the graphical user interface.

12.-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the step of receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:

receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

23. (Original) The method recited in claim 22, wherein the step of verifying the one or more metric tests includes the step of verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the instructions for creating a schema includes instructions for generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

28. (Canceled)

29. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instruction for performing the step of verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, wherein the means for creating a schema includes means for generating a schema based on Extensible Markup Language (XML), wherein the schema provides a template for defining service level agreements.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising means for verifying that the particular network includes one or more devices that may be configured to perform the one or more tests.

34.-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 6, further comprising instructions for performing the steps of:

storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the step of receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:

receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

37. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium recited in claim 36, wherein the step of verifying the one or more metric tests includes the step of verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 10, wherein the computer-readable medium further comprises instructions for performing the steps of:

storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the instructions for receiving information defining the service level agreement includes instructions for:

receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

40. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 39, wherein the instructions for verifying the one or more metric tests includes instructions for verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

41. (Cancelled)

42. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, further comprising:

means for storing information that defines the level of service that has been guaranteed to the customer by the service provider;

wherein the one or more tests are one or more metric tests, and the means for receiving information defining the service level agreement comprises:

means for receiving through a standardized open interface metric parameter information that defines the one or more metric tests that are to be used to verify that the customer is receiving the level of service that has been guaranteed by the service provider; and

means for verifying that based on the metric parameter information, the one or more metric tests will provide an appropriate set of tests for measuring the level of service that is being provided to the customer by the service provider.

43. (Previously Presented) The network device recited in claim 11, wherein the means for verifying the one or more metric tests includes means for verifying that the one or more metric tests conform to a standard of testing that has been approved by the service provider.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining whether the updated first information defines a new service level contract, updating the service level agreement that is associated with and affected by the new service level contract, rolling out tests to the agents, and configuring the source devices to perform the tests.

46. (New) The network device of claim 10, further comprising sequences of instructions which when executed cause determining whether the updated first information defines a new service level contract, updating the service level agreement that is associated with and affected by the new service level contract, rolling out tests to the agents, and configuring the source devices to perform the tests.